



# Young Women and Girls

The most important key population for the HIV epidemic in Southern Africa is young women and girls. Adolescent girls have an HIV prevalence which is 8 times higher than their male counterparts and almost 2,000 young South African women are newly infected every week. The Young Women & Girls Programme, funded by the Global Fund, offers a targeted package of health, education and support services to support and empower young women and adolescent girls.

In July 2016, the Presidency launched a national campaign, *She Conquers*, focusing on empowering girls and young women aged 15-29. As part of this national initiative, NACOSA implements the Young Women & Girls Programme in four districts in Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo.

*"In my community, children are under a lot of stress, especially the girls."*

– Peer mentor, KwaZulu-Natal

## SUPPORTING & EMPOWERING

The aim is to decrease HIV incidence, teenage pregnancy and gender based violence by increasing retention in school and economic opportunities with a package of support which includes:

- In-school peer-education **Soul Buddyz** clubs for young people age 10-14 and a parenting programme for their caregivers.
- **Keeping Girls in School**, a school-based intervention to identify and support female

learners who are at risk of dropping out of school.

- **Rise Clubs** for young women out of school, aged 19 to 24, offering life skills and empowerment activities.
- **Community-based HIV testing services**, TB screening and sexual and reproductive health services and education.
- **Community dialogues** to address harmful gender attitudes and power imbalances and promote the uptake of young men's reproductive and health services.

## YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS

100	Soul Buddyz and Rise Clubs
20,000	young women & girls reach per quarter
R217.4m	investment by the Global Fund

Keeping Girls in School reported a decline in school drop-outs and a **35%** reduction in teen pregnancies.

## IDENTIFYING VULNERABILITY

The Young Women & Girls Programme looks at multiple interconnected factors to identify young women and girls who are at-risk, including:

### SOCIAL

- Living with grandmothers
- In age disparate relationships
- With caregiving responsibilities and/or are heads of households or are mothers
- Showing signs of neglect

### EDUCATIONAL

- Struggling academically or have repeated a grade
- Not consistently attending school

### HEALTH

- Living with HIV or affected by HIV, including orphans
- Pregnant
- With sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

## ECONOMIC

- Unemployed
- From households with girls not accessing social grants and have no source of income.

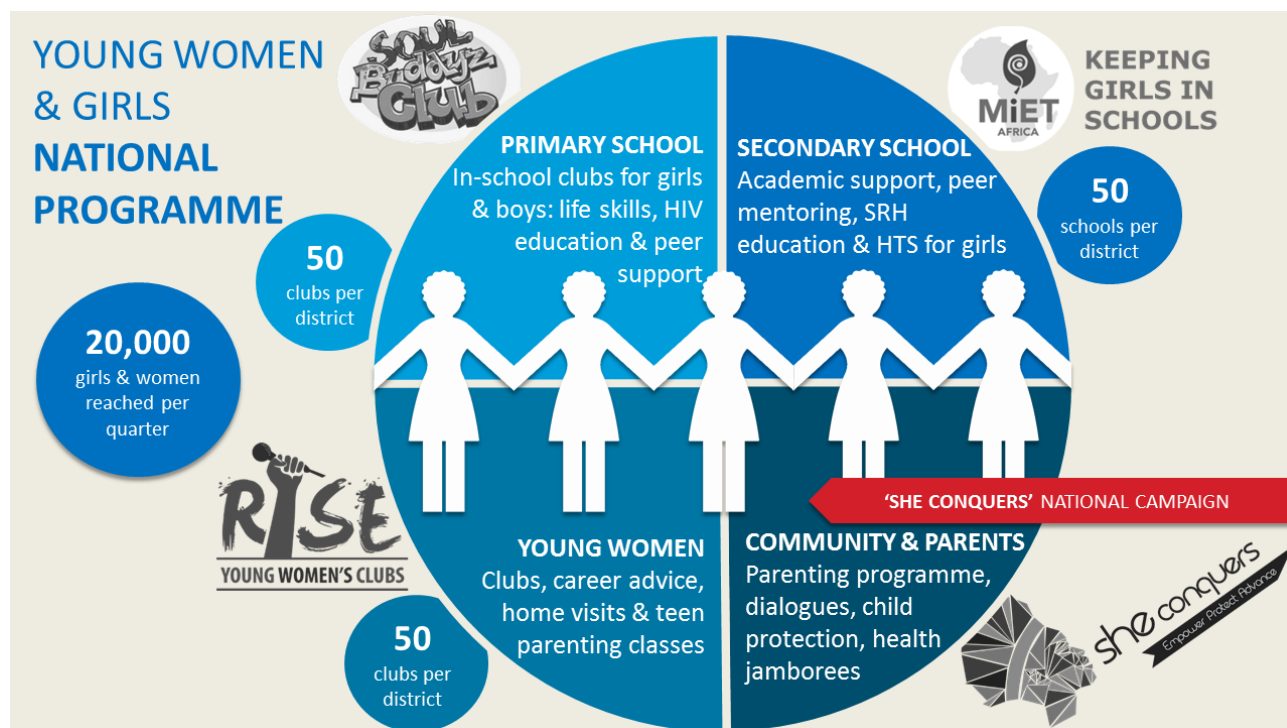
*“This programme has taught me to stand up for myself. I know to confide in people that I trust. And I know that I mustn't compare myself to others. I am my own role model!”*

– Asanda, 14, KwaZulu-Natal

## AGE-APPROPRIATE

Programme interventions are structured and age-appropriate, adapted to the evolving emotional and physical development needs of three distinct target groups:

- Young girls aged 10-14
- Adolescent girls aged 14-18
- Young women aged 19-24



Services are delivered to primary schools, high schools and in the community. So while the primary target group are young women and girls aged 10 to 24, some programme components also include boys and young men.

**Community dialogues** promote positive male norms and address issues such as gender and power.

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